

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ (٢٢)

When the previous verse mentioned God's fear, this verse came up with a mention of the basic attributes of God so that the believers, the disbelievers and the hypocrites all come to know of these attributes. They should thus have an idea of how to fear Him, how much to love Him, how to pin their hopes in Him, how to put their trust in Him and how should they live and die for His cause. I have stated many times in this *tafsīr* this fact of philosophy of religion that the basis of the *sharī'ah* and religion is the attributes of God and what these attributes entail. Whatever is mentioned in the Qur'ān from the beginning to the end is a mention of manifestations of God's attributes and what they necessitate. From these attributes has emanated the philosophy of religion, and from them have the manifestations and forms of religious directives come into being. For this reason, it is essential to understand them; however, to understand them, it is essential to understand the whole Qur'ān. Here, I will just briefly allude to those aspects which are helpful in understanding the initial requirements of these attributes.

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ : first of all, the Almighty has reminded us of His divinity and also of the fact that no one except Him is God. For this reason, a person should turn to him in both hope and despair. No one except Him is worthy of being called God or being worshipped. Similarly, no one should pin his hopes in some one other than God by regarding him to be the fountainhead of granting wishes and prayers.

عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ : He knows what is hidden and what is apparent. The word الْغَيْبِ (hidden) is used here with reference to people; otherwise, everything is apparent to God. Both hope and fear relate to this attribute. The aspect of despair is related to it the following manner: whatever a person does whether openly or secretly, it is in God's knowledge, and when everything is in His knowledge, He shall necessarily call man to account for each and every thing. At that time, neither will a person be able to hide any of his words or deeds nor any intercessor will wrongly intercede for him before the Almighty. The aspect of hope is related to it in the following manner: When a person's Lord is aware of all the hidden and the apparent, then he should repose all his trust in Him, and present all his pleadings before Him.

هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ : I have already elaborated upon the difference between الرَّحْمَنُ and الرَّحِيمُ in the *tafsīr* of the basmallah verse. The former alludes to the fervour and zeal found in God's mercy and the latter to its

23. He is God, besides whom there is no other deity. He knows the unseen and the seen. He is the Compassionate, the Merciful.

continuity and permanence. A little deliberation shows that in these attributes too, the aspects of both hope and fear are present. The aspect of hope is very evident: when God is both الرَّحْمَنُ and الرَّحِيمُ, then there is no question of any oppression and injustice with anyone so that anyone may require an intercessor to protect oneself from these. Whatever God has done and whatever He shall do, He has done and shall do for the sake of mercy – both in this world and in the Hereafter. The aspect of fear is that when God is both الرَّحْمَنُ and الرَّحِيمُ, He will not tolerate the oppression of anyone and will necessarily avenge the oppression of all those who were guilty of it. For this very reason, at various places in the Qur'ān, He has regarded the Day of Judgement to be a manifestation of His mercy: it is this mercy which necessitates such a day come so that He does justice with each and every person: كَتَبَ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ لِيَجْمَعَ كُفُومَكُمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ (١٢:٦) (God has decreed mercy for Himself: surely, He will gather you all on the Day of Judgement, (6:12)).

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهَيْمِنُ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ
الْمُتَكَبِّرُ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ (٢٣)²⁴

The verse begins with the words already mentioned in the previous verse. Evident from this repetition is that the refutation of polytheism and the affirmation of monotheism is the most important thing pointed out here. The reason obviously is that polytheism emanates from wrong concepts regarding the attributes of God. And when on these attributes all religion and *sharī'ah* are founded, as I have referred to earlier, then it is essential that any fissure in this foundation be taken care of.

After this, eight of God's worthy attributes are stated one after the other: there is no particle of conjugation between them. I have already explained this principle of the Arabic language at some place in this *tafsīr* that when attributes are mentioned in this way without any particle of conjugation, then it means that they are simultaneously present in the noun they qualify.

الْمَلِكُ (al-Mālik): He is the Sovereign Lord. He alone created the world and He alone is its master and ruler. It is because of this right of His that He sent His messengers so that they are able to inform people of His directives, and people while obeying them earn His pleasure.

الْقُدُّوسُ (al-Quddūs) He is devoid of any blemish, any shortcoming and

24. He is God, besides whom there is no other deity. He is the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One, the Giver of Peace, the Giver of Refuge, the Guardian, the Mighty One, the All-Powerful, the Most High! Exalted be God above their idols!

any wrong. For this reason, He has revealed His Book to purify and cleanse His servants. He sent His messengers that people can become worthy of His nearness by being cleansed. In Sūrah Jumu‘ah, both these attributes: الْمَلِكُ and الْقُدُّوسُ are referred to together with what they entail. First, God’s attributes are mentioned thus: (١: ٦٢) الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ. After what these attributes entail is stated in these words: هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ (٢: ٦٢) (It is He Who has sent forth among the Unlettered a Messenger of their own to recite to them His revelations and purifies them, (62:2)). A little deliberation shows that He sent His Messenger and revealed His Book because He is the sovereign Lord. An obvious requirement of He being the sovereign Lord is that He send His envoys to His subjects and also send His directives to them, and He wanted His subjects to be purified and cleansed because He Himself is pure and perfect. He does not like that His servants be incriminated with sin. Further down in the *sūrah*, the requirements of the attributes of ‘Azīz and Ḥakīm have also been stated, which shall be explained when the time comes.

السَّلَامُ (al-Ṣalām): This word means “peace, happiness and serenity”. If a person has to wish peace to someone, he uses this very word. About the night of destiny, the Qur’ān has stated: (٥: ٩٧) سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ (that night is peace in entirety; it is till break of dawn, (97:5)). In other words, God is a refuge and shield for His servants against every calamity and danger. When a person resigns himself to His refuge, he becomes happy and content. It is a blessing of this attribute that remembering God is a means of peace and tranquillity for the hearts: أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ (٢٨: ١٣) (surely in the remembrance of God all hearts are comforted, (13:28)).

الْمُؤْمِنُ (al-Mu‘min): This means “one of who gives refuge”. In other words, when a person seeks His refuge against Satan and his agents, He grants him His refuge. This refuge cannot be procured anywhere else and from anyone else. Satan has access to everyone except God.

الْمُهَيِّمُ (al-Muḥaymin): In the opinion of Khalīl and Abū ‘Ubaydah, this word means “guardian”. Ibn al-Anbārī is of the view that it means “protector” (*al-qā’im ‘alā al-nās*). Imām Farāhī says that it means “one who can be trusted and is one’s advocate”. In my opinion, there is not much difference between these meanings. He who is the guardian and protector is the one who can be trusted and who is one’s advocate. The Qur’ān is also al-Muḥaymin because it is a guardian over all other divine scriptures.

الْعَزِيزُ (al-‘Azīz): This attribute has been explained on several occasions in this *tafsīr*. It has the meaning of being inaccessible and beyond, and also that of being powerful and strong. In other words, none

can dominate or overpower God. He can vanquish all.

الْجَبَّارُ (al-Jabbār): This word refers to someone having might and power. This word is also used for stalks of tall palm trees. In the Qur'ān, it has also been used for the formidable people fearing whom the Israelites had pleaded thus to the Almighty: *إِنَّ فِيهَا قَوْمًا جَبَّارِينَ وَإِنَّا لَنَنُذِلُّهَا*: *حَتَّىٰ يَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا* (٢٢:٥) (a race of powerful people dwells in this land. And We do not have the courage to set foot in it till they are gone, (5:22). This attribute refutes all those concepts of divinity in which all significance is given to goddesses.

الْمُتَكَبِّرُ (al-Mutakabbir): This word refers to someone who knows that he is great and superior. If this feeling is in someone other than the Almighty, then it is wrong because none except God has attained greatness and superiority on His own. All others are great and superior because God has blessed them with greatness and superiority. The feeling of superiority is worthy for God and also a reality because His superiority is His personal and is since the beginning and will remain with Him eternally. It is because of this feeling He has that He does not tolerate any partners in His kingdom and dominion. This cognizance of the Almighty is stated thus in other divine scriptures: "God your Lord is a *ghuyu*#[honourable] God; just as you would not tolerate that your wife sleep with someone else, he also does not tolerate that His servant serve someone else."²⁵ In my opinion, what the Qur'ān has denoted by the word *الْمُتَكَبِّرُ* (al-Mutakabbir) is denoted in these scriptures by the word *ghuyu*#[honourable].

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ: The implication is that what is the comparison between these attributes of majesty and perfection of the Almighty and between these imaginary deities of the Idolaters. The God Who possesses these attributes is over and above associating such partners with. If such an association is made, then His other basic attributes will stand in conflict with it, and if this is done forcibly, then a disharmony will be created in His attributes.

هُوَ اللَّهُ الْخَالِقُ الْبَارِئُ الْمُصَوِّرُ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ (٢٤)²⁶

It is God Who causes all the phases of creation of everything to take

25. I have been unable to locate this verse in the divine scriptures. (Translator)

26. He is God, the Creator, the Originator, the Modeller. His are the most gracious attributes. All that is in the heavens and the earth gives glory to Him. And He is the Mighty, the Wise One.

place. He makes a plan of everything, and then creates it and models and perfects it. Neither does He ask for help to complete any of these phases nor does anyone help Him out or is able to help Him in them; so how can partners be imputed to Him in this process. Each and every being passes through these three phases of creation. The first phase is that of design and plan. The Arabic word used for it is خلق. The second phase is to bring it into existence. The Arabic word used for it is برء. The third phase is to perfect it. The Arabic word used for it is تصوير. If it is God alone Who is responsible for these three phases of a thing, He alone is worthy of being glorified and worshipped by all.

The implication of the words لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى is that mentioned in this verse are some basic attributes of the Almighty. All other gracious names and attributes also belong to Him. The word أَسْمَاءُ here refers to attributes. All names of God express some or the other attribute He possesses.

The implication of the words يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ is that since it is God Who has caused all the phases of creation of a thing to take place, hence everything in the heavens and the earth glorifies Him. If a person does not do so while exercising his freedom of will, then this is an act of not acknowledging the truth and arrogance on his part. The correct attitude for him is to glorify and to worship God and not associate partners with Him.

The words وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ at the end once again remind man of God's attributes with which this *sūrah* began. A person should keep in mind that God is powerful (عَزِيزٌ) and hence He can do what He wants to. Had He intended, He would have forced man to worship and glorify Him the way the rest of the universe is doing. However, He at the same time is wise (حَكِيمٌ). For this reason, He wanted to try man by giving him the freedom of will. He wanted to test whether after being granted with this status he recognizes the right of God on him or ends up a slave of Satan.

With the grace of God, I come to the end of this *sūrah*'s *tafsīr*. فالحمد لله (so gratitude be to God on this).

Rahmānābād

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